

Forthcoming CAWAS Meetings		
Friday 8th February	Martin Braddock	The Rise and Fall and Renaissance of Artificial Gravity
Friday 8th March	Mary McIntire	Star Trails
Friday 12th April	Dr. Andrew Green	In Search of the Aurora
BAA Back to Basics Workshop Saturday 2nd March 09:45 - 18:00 Museum St. Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich. IP1 2EF.		
Practical Astronomy Show Saturday 9th March 09:30 - 17:00 Kettering Conference Centre, Thurston Drive, Kettering. NN15 6PB.		

Observing sessions take place at 19:00 (clock time) with RADAS members at Barby Cricket Club

February 2019	March 2019
Friday 1st	Friday 8th
Saturday 9th	Saturday 30th

February	Event	
Sunday 10th	Moon near Mars	
Tuesday 12th	Moon - first quarter, Mars near Uranus	☾
Monday 18th	Mercury near Neptune, Venus near Saturn	
Tuesday 19th	Moon - full	☉
Friday 22nd	Chimaera occultation	
Tuesday 26th	Moon - last quarter	☾
Wednesday 27th	Mercury greatest elongation, Moon near Jupiter	
March		
Saturday 2nd	Moon near Venus and Saturn	
Wednesday 6th	Moon - new	●
Thursday 7th	Neptune conjunction	

Coventry and Warwickshire Astronomical Society
The society usually meets on the second Friday in the month, at Earlsdon Methodist Church Hall. The meetings begin at 19:15 and end at 21:30.

Web Site: <http://www.covastro.org.uk>

Mailing list
Join the CAWAS mailing list and receive irregular information of astronomical events and CAWAS news.

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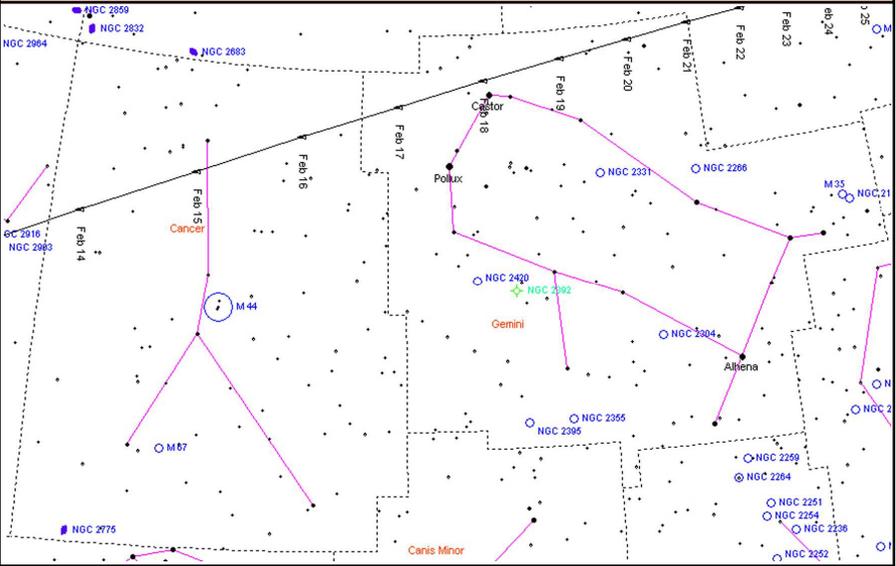
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Coventry and Warwickshire Astronomical Society

Sky Notes

February 8th to March 8th 2019 No. 257



The Twins catch a Crab

Visible high in the southern sky this month, both the constellations of Gemini (the Twins) and Cancer (the Crab) contain bright open clusters of stars. The most obvious of these is M44 (the Beehive) in Cancer which appears as a faint patch to the naked eye. At magnitude +3.1 it is one of the closest to the Earth at a distance of 577 ly. To its south is the more distant (2600 - 2900 ly) and fainter (mag. +6.9) M67, it is also one of the oldest clusters with an age of around 4 Gyr.

Gemini has its own bright cluster, M35 (3870 ly and mag. +5.1), while also in Gemini is the famous Eskimo Nebula, NGC2392, resembling a head surrounded by a parka, this planetary nebula is easily seen in small telescopes despite its magnitude being +10.1.

Passing through the north of both constellations is comet Iwamoto after it has left Leo - see chart inside.

Time given in these skynotes is Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC) known as GMT here in the UK.

Sun moves north from Capricornus into Aquarius. On Feb 11 the equation of time reaches a minimum of 14.23 mins, so our clocks will be 20mins ahead of the Sun (summertime comes early!).

February 8th	Rise 07:36	Set 17:05	Dec $-14^{\circ} 56'$
March 8th	Rise 06:37	Set 17:57	Dec $-4^{\circ} 52'$

Moon passes through perigee at 09:09 on Feb 19 and shortly after at 15:54 we have a full Moon, so making it appear larger than normal at 33.4754' diameter. This is the largest full Moon until Christmas Eve 2026.

Mercury ($-1.3 5.0''$ to $+2.1 9.6''$) moves from Capricornus through Aquarius into Pisces and is visible for about an hour after sunset in the WSW as it heads towards its greatest elongation east of 18.1° on Feb 27 and its best evening apparition of the year. On Feb 18 Mercury passes 1° north of Neptune.

Venus ($-4.2 18.0''$ to $-4.0 14.9''$) moves from Sagittarius into Capricornus and is visible low in the SE for about 2 hours before sunrise at the beginning of the month and 1 hour at the end. On Feb 18 Venus passes 1° north of Saturn, then on March 2 the crescent Moon joins in as it sits in between Venus and Saturn (7° to the west of Venus and 6° to the east of Saturn).

Mars ($+1.0 5.9''$ to $+1.3 5.1''$) moves from Pisces into Aries and is visible high in the WSW for the first half of the night, its increasing declination and easterly motion combining to make it set at the same time (23:25) throughout the month. On Feb 10 the Moon lies 6° to the south, then on Feb 12 Mars passes just 1° north of Uranus.

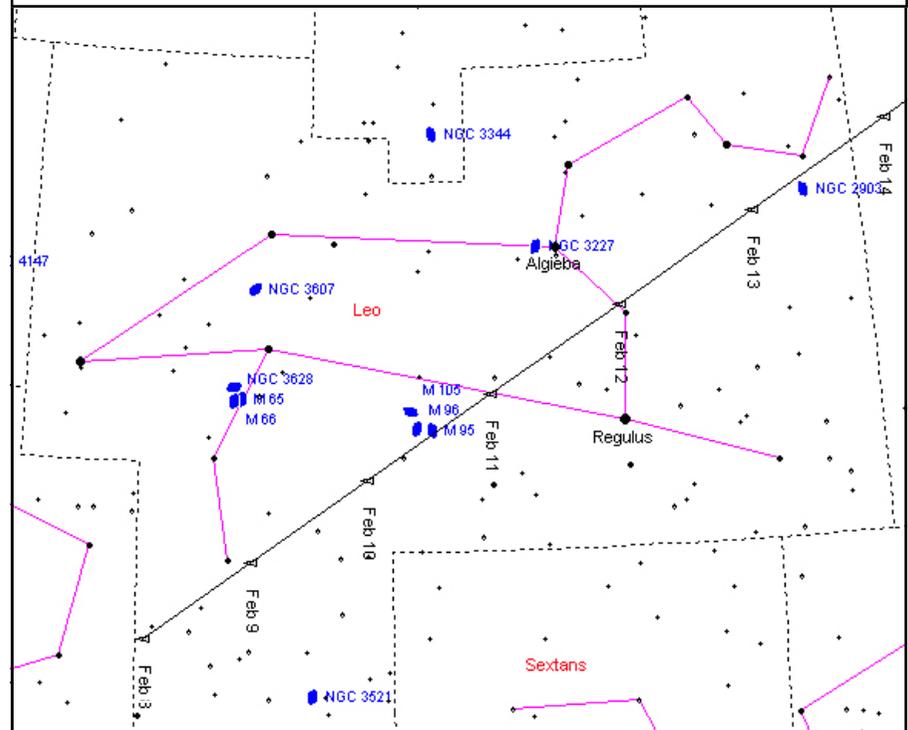
Jupiter ($-1.9 34.2''$ to $-2.1 37.0''$) lies in Ophiuchus and is visible low in the SSE in the early morning, rising at 04:10 at the beginning of the month and 02:40 at the end. On Feb 27 the Moon lies 4° to the west.

Saturn ($+0.6 15.2''$ to $+0.6 15.7''$) lies in Sagittarius and can be seen very low down in the SE for about an hour or so before dawn as it gradually moves more out of the Sun's glare each day.

Uranus ($+5.9 3.5''$ to $+5.9 3.4''$) lies in Aries and is visible high in the WSW for the first half of the night, setting just before midnight at the beginning of the month and 22:00 at the end.

Neptune ($+7.8 2.2''$) lies in Aquarius and is not really visible this month as it passes through conjunction on March 7.

Chimaera (623) a mag. +14.0 asteroid, with a diameter of 44.7km, occults mag. +9.8 star TYC 0239-01406-1 (RA 09h 46m 08.3141s Dec $+03^{\circ} 57' 50.181''$) on Feb 22 at 01:00. The occultation lasts at most 3.8s and the combined light of the asteroid and star will drop by 4.22 magnitudes. Unfortunately there is a waning gibbous Moon 42° away, but as we are ideally placed to see the event it is worth trying to observe it. Detailed finder charts can be found at <http://www.asteroidoccultation.com>



Comet C/2008 Y1 (Iwamoto) is approaching Earth and will pass at a distance of 0.3au (45 million km) on Feb 12. It is expected to reach mag +7 by then. The chart above shows its path through Leo passing close to the galaxies M95 and NGC2903.

My old OS map of Coventry from 1974 says that magnetic north is 8° west of true north. No more, currently it is just $53'$ west and decreasing rapidly as the north magnetic pole races at an increasing rate across the Arctic Ocean towards Siberia. In fact on September 27 last year Dunwich Heath in Suffolk became the first place in the UK to have a measured easterly magnetic variation for 370 years. One theory for the cause of the rapid shift in the pole is that there is a twisting column of light inner mantle material rising under the Arctic - a polar magnetic upwelling.